

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES BYLINER BY FLORA LEWIS ENTITLED "ISRAELI CHIEF INSISTS THAT ONLY LEBANESE CONTROL BORDER AREA.

2. BARS SYRIANS OR PALESTINIANS. RABIN REFLECTS A NEW OPTIMISM IN STATEMENTS -- SOCIALIST CONFEREES ASK RESUMED TALKS ON MIDEAST."

3. GENEVA. PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN OF ISRAEL SAID TODAY THAT ONLY THE LEBANESE ARMY SHOULD CONTROL THE SOUTHERN AREA OF THE COUNTRY BORDERING ISRAEL AND THAT HE CONSIDERED THE PRESENCE OF EITHER SYRIAN OR PALESTINIAN ARMED UNITS THERE "INTOLERABLE."

4. HOWEVER, MR. RABIN WHO IS HERE FOR A CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, SAID THAT ISRAEL STOOD FIRMLY BY THE 1918 BORDERS BETWEEN LEBANON AND WHAT WAS THEN PALESTINE AIDES TO THE PRIME MINISTER DENIED REPORTS THAT ISRAEL HAD UNCLASSIFIED

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ANY INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING A UNITED NATIONS FORCE AS A

BUFFER WITH LEBANON.

5. MR. RABIN, SPEAKING AT A NEWS CONFERENCE, ALSO, SAID THAT HE WOULD MEET WITH THE EGYPTIANS TO DISCUSS A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT "ANY PLACE, ANY TIME."

6. WHILE THESE STATEMENTS REPRESENTED NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN ISRAELI POSITION, THEY HAD A SPECIAL IMPORTANCE IN VIEW OF THE NEW ISRAELI ASSESSMENT OF RECENT CHANGES IN THE ARAB WORLD. THEY REFLECT A DECIDEDLY MORE OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE ON THE CHANCE FOR NEGOTIATIONS THAN WAS THE CASE A FEW WEEKS AGO.

7. THE CONFEREES VOTED A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR EARLY RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, WHICH ADJOURNED AFTER A BRIEF SESSION FOLLOWING THE 1973 WAR. THE DELEGATIONS FROM MALTA AND SENEGAL ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTING BECAUSE THE RESOLUTION DID NOT MENTION THE PALESTINIANS SPECIFICALLY WHEN IT ENDORSED SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

8. THE MOVE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMES AT A TIME WHEN PROSPECTS FOR RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST SEEM MUCH IMPROVED. YESTERDAY MR. RABIN CALLED FOR A MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE ON THE PATTERN OF THE MEETING LAST YEAR AT HELSINKI THAT CONCLUDED THE SESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE.

9. ISRAELI OFFICIALS, SPEAKING SEPARATELY AND PRIVATELY, SAID THAT TALKS MIGHT BE EXPECTED IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, DEPENDING ON HOW LONG IT TOOK THE ADMINISTRATION OF JIMMY CARTER TO CONSIDER AND DECIDE ITS MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY.

10. THE REASONS FOR OPTIMISM NOW, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI SOURCES, ARE THE NEW SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE LEBANESE WAR AND SAUDI ARABIA'S GROWING ROLE AS THE ARBITER OF DISPUTES AMONG ARABS.

11. IN THE RECENT AGREEMENT ON LEBANON, WORKED OUT UNDER UNCLASSIFIED

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SAUDI AUSPICES AT RIYADH, EGYPT ACCEPTED WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED "THE SYRIAN SOLUTION"--IN EFFECT THE DOMINANT SYRIAN INFLUENCE ON LEBANON, ENFORCED BY THE LARGE PRESENCE OF THE SYRIAN ARMY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF AN ARAB LEAGUE PEACEKEEPING FORCE.

12. INFORMED ISRAELIS SAID THAT THE SYRIANS CONCEDED, IN RETURN, THAT EGYPT SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN SEEKING A

POLITICAL SOLUTION WITH ISRAEL. THIS UNDERSTANDING WAS SAID TO HAVE INCLUDED BOTH ABANDONMENT OF SYRIA'S PREVIOUS "FIRST PRIORITY" OF CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL, AND

AGREEMENT BY SYRIA AND EGYPT THAT THE GOAL OF NEGOTIATIONS NOW SHOULD BE AN OVER ALL SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL -- NOT ADDITIONAL PARTIAL AGREEMENTS.

13. SYRIA STRONGLY OPPOSED EGYPT'S SIGNING OF TWO LIMITED TROOP-WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENTS WITH ISRAEL IN 1974. UNTIL THE RIYADH RECONCILIATION, CAIRO AND DAMASCUS TOOK SHARPLY CONFLICTING POSITIONS ON VIRTUALLY ALL MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS.

14. SAUDI ARABIA'S WILLINGNESS TO USE ITS POLITICAL AND, MORE IMPORTANT, ITS FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO BRING ABOUT THE INTER-ARB AGREEMENT IS OF KEY IMPORTANCE TO ISRAEL. IT OPENS THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EFFECTIVE MODERATING INFLUENCE ON FUTURE ARAB-ISRAELI TALKS.

15. ISRAELI SOURCES NOTED THAT NEITHER IRAQ NOR LIBYA, THE TWO MOST RADICAL ARAB COUNTRIES, IN THE ISRAELI VIEW, TOOK PART IN THE RIYADH MEETING. THIS WAS CONSIDERED FURTHER CIRCUMSTANTIAL CONFIRMATION OF REPORTS FROM THIRD PARTIES THAT SYRIA HAD AGREED TO THE EGYPTIAN APPROACH ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL.

16. THE NEW SAUDI ROLE HAS ALSO EMERGED IN NORTH AFRICA, WHERE PRINCE FAHD, A MAJOR FIGURE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF KING KHALID, HAS BEEN TRAVELING BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA IN AN EFFORT TO COMPOSE THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER THE WESTERN SAHARA.

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17. SOME WESTERN EUROPEAN LEADERS AT THE SOCIALIST CONFERENCE HERE IN GENEVA, HAVE BEEN AMONG THE RECENT HIGH-LEVEL VISITORS TO RIYADH. THEY CAME BACK WITH REPORTS THAT KHALID HAD BROUGHT ABOUT A CHANGE OF ATMOSPHERE IN HIS COUNTRY.

18. THE EUROPEANS SAID THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY THE EMERGENCE OF YOUNGER, MODERN-MINDED OFFICIALS LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS TO SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS RATHER THAN RHETORICAL RESONANCE. THE TONE OF "FANATICISM," EVEN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM WAS SAID TO HAVE ABATED CONSIDERABLY.

19. THESE REPORTS HAVE REACHED THE ISRAELIS, WHO FIND GROUNDS FOR ENCOURAGEMENT THAT SAUDI ARABIA MIGHT NOW BE

WILLING TO PROVIDE FUNDS THAT COULD ENABLE BOTH EGYPT AND SYRIA TO COPE WITH THEIR TREMENDOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. IN SUCH A CLIMATE, ISRAELI OFFICIALS FEEL, THESE NEIGHBOR-

ING ARAB LEADERS WOULD BECOME MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN A SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL, TO GIVE PRIORITY TO THEIR HOME FRONTS.

20. THE ISRAELI VIEW REMAINS WARY, HOWEVER. THE CURRENT ESTIMATE IS THAT EGYPT IS STILL NOT SEEKING A COMPLETE PEACE AGREEMENT BUT ONLY AN ACCORD ON "NONBELLIGERENCE" THAT WOULD FALL WELL SHORT OF A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT.

21. THE ISRAELI OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR ARAB OPPONENTS WILL NOT BE READY FOR PEACE UNTIL THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THERE CAN BE NO SOLUTION THROUGH ANOTHER WAR HOWEVER LONG DELAYED. NONETHELESS, THE ISRAELI INTEREST IN RETURNING TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE WAS STRESSED MORE STRONGLY THAN HAD BEEN THE CASE FOR A LONG TIME. ROBINSON

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